

pre[k]now

# Quality: The Critical Need for Pre-K

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# Overview

- What Is High Quality?
- Why High Quality?
- The Quality of Pre-K in the States

## In High-Quality Pre-K, Children:

- Engage in activities designed to promote positive social and mental development in children their age
- Learn about letters, colors, shapes, and numbers
- Are exposed to music, art, and science



## In High-Quality Pre-K, Children:

- Learn to listen to other children and teachers
- Take turns and share
- Have story-time, snack time, and nap time
- Participate in teacher-directed and free play
- Benefit from their parents' active involvement in the program and their child's early learning



## In Quality Classrooms:

- Teachers interact frequently with children
- Children are actively engaged in learning



## In Quality Classrooms:

- Activities and materials are changed regularly to address children's interests and abilities
- The classroom is well organized, including materials for language development (e.g., books), mathematics (e.g., objects to count), science (e.g., plants, animals), art (e.g., crayons, paints), and music (e.g., tapes, records, CDs)



## How Do We Measure Quality Pre-K?

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) uses ten criteria:

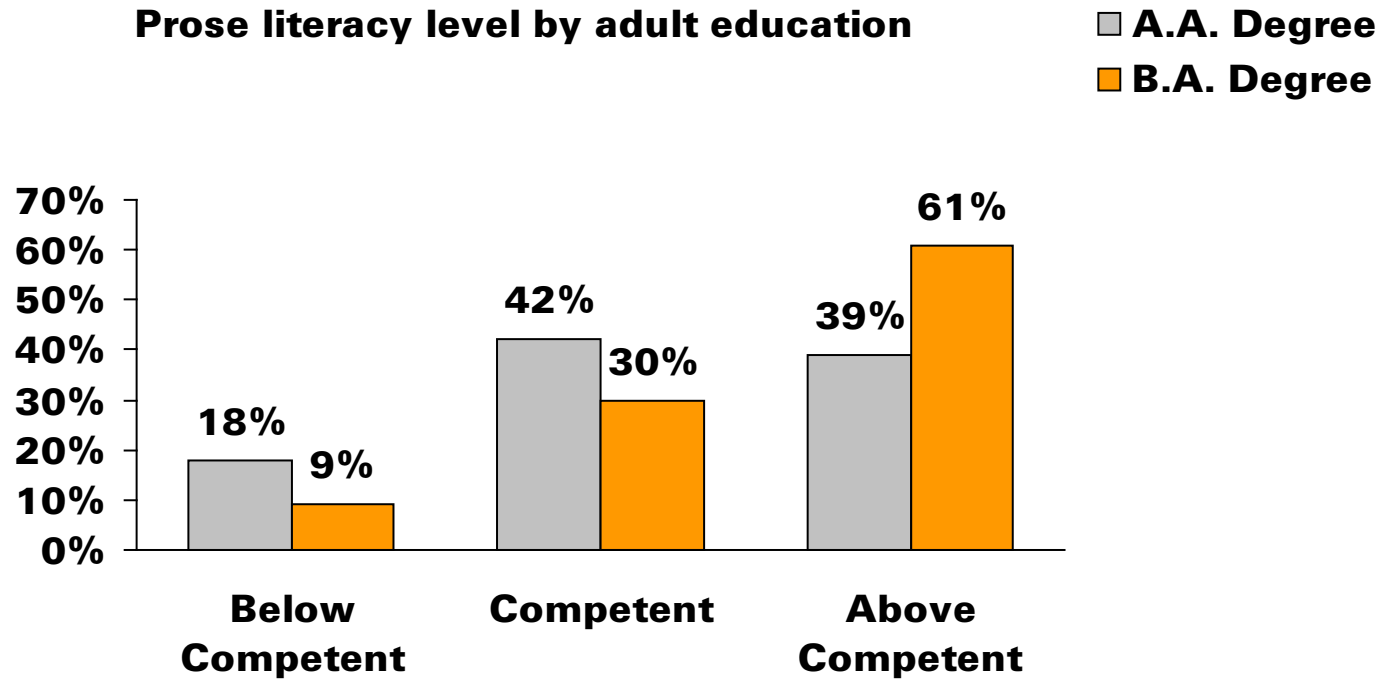
- Teacher degree requirement
- Teacher with specialized training
- Teacher in-service requirements
- Assistant teacher degree requirement
- Screening, referral, and support services requirements
- Class size
- Teacher/child ratios
- Early learning standards
- Meal requirements
- State program monitoring

## Teachers with a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood development are generally:

- significantly more sensitive, engaging and attentive
- less negative (less likely to be critical or punitive)
- less detached (less likely to show low levels of interaction and interest)

**Source:** Howes, Carolee; Whitebook, Marcy; & Phillips, Deboorah. (1992). Teacher characteristics and effective teaching in child care: Findings from the National Child Care Staffing study. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 21(6), 399-414.

Adults with a bachelor's degree are more likely to be literate.

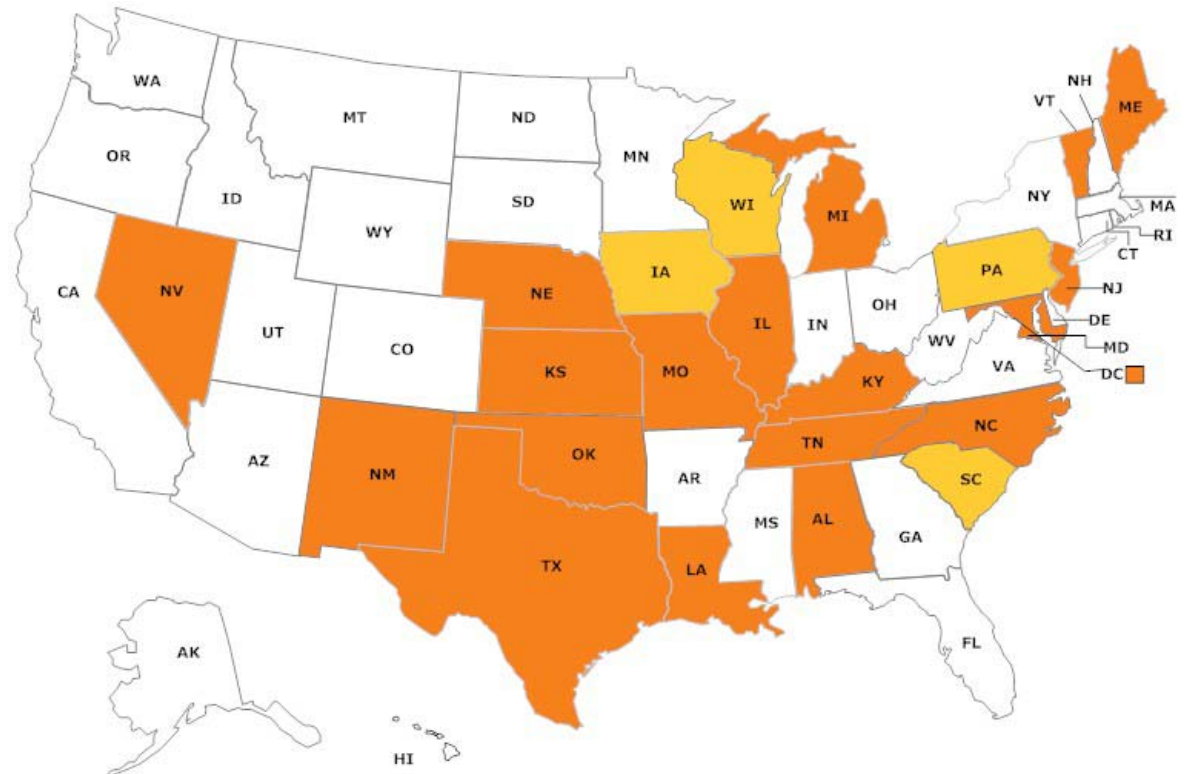


Source: National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992. Analysis by Anthony P. Carnevale and Donna M. Desrochers, Educational Testing Service

## States that require a bachelor's degree for pre-k teachers

Alabama  
 District of Columbia  
 Illinois  
 Iowa  
 Kansas  
 Kentucky  
 Louisiana  
 Maine  
 Maryland  
 Michigan  
 Missouri  
 Nebraska  
 Nevada  
 New Jersey  
 New Mexico  
 North Carolina  
 Oklahoma  
 Pennsylvania  
 South Carolina  
 Tennessee  
 Texas  
 Vermont  
 Wisconsin

**Source:** National Institute for Early Education Research



Indicates that some but not all state programs require a bachelor's degree

## What pre-k teachers say about having a bachelor's degree:

- The most remarkable difference in having a BA is understanding the children's needs more fully and being able to communicate with them better
- Knowing how to control the classroom better
- Setting up the classroom and using materials more effectively
- Better understanding of how children learn numbers and letters
- Improved ability to guide children through greater understanding of the complexity of early learning
- Understanding that both children and teacher learn from each other

## Small Class Size Means:

- No more than 20 children in a room with one teacher and one aide
- Teachers get to know the children well and can plan accordingly
- Children get to know each other and the teachers and feel comfortable in the classroom
- Children are more likely to initiate activities on their own

## Low Teacher-to-Child Ratio Means:

- A ratio of one teacher for every ten children or fewer
- Children can ask and answer questions and receive individualized teacher attention
- Teachers are less restrictive and controlling and more supportive of each child's learning style
- Teachers can work with small groups to extend children's language, guide children's social interactions, and encourage exploration and problem solving

## A quality curriculum includes:

- Recognizable learning and educational components
- Opportunities to develop strong skills in many areas, such as literacy, math, and science
- Specific goals that integrate learning across all aspects of a child's development: cognitive, physical, social, and emotional
- Positive approaches to learning
  - Hands-on exploration
  - Recognition for trying hard and paying attention

## Screening and Referral Requirements

- Vision, hearing, health and developmental screenings
- Identify health problems early to help ensure children's optimal learning and development
- Identify children who would benefit from more intensive services
- Link families to health and other services in the community

## Support Services and Meals

- Inform families about child development, disease prevention and support services in the community
- Offer direct support services such as parent conferences or home visits
- Promote healthy, socially positive behavior
- Ensure proper nutrition so that children can learn
- Actively seek strong family involvement

## Pre-K Systems Must Be High Quality

- Strong governance and leadership
- Diverse delivery: schools, community-based organizations, Head Start
- Monitoring
- Technical assistance and teacher supports
- Aligned with K-12
- Transportation
- Wrap-around care

## Children Benefit from High-Quality Pre-K

- Increased Educational Success
  - Less grade repetition
  - Less special education
  - Improved social behavior and cognitive abilities
  - Higher high school graduation rates
- Increased Life Success
  - Lower teenage pregnancy rates
  - Less involvement in crime
  - Higher employment and earnings

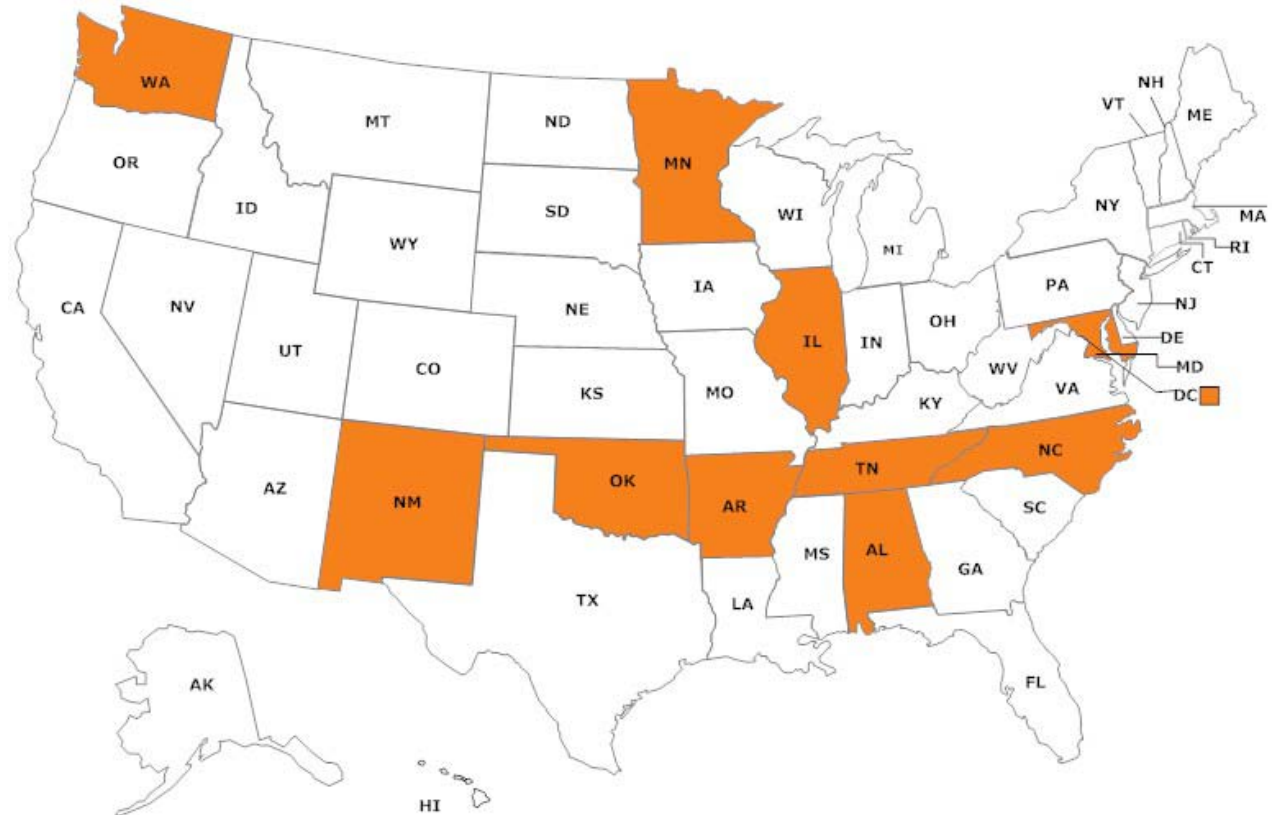
## Society Benefits from High-Quality Pre-K

- More productive workforce
- Increased competitiveness
- Reduced crime
- Increased school achievement (NCLB)
- Significant return on investment
  - Savings in K-12 costs
  - Savings in social services costs
  - Savings in crime costs
  - Increased tax revenue

## Quality Pre-K:

### 10 States plus DC get a 9 or 10 on NIEER's 10-Point Scale

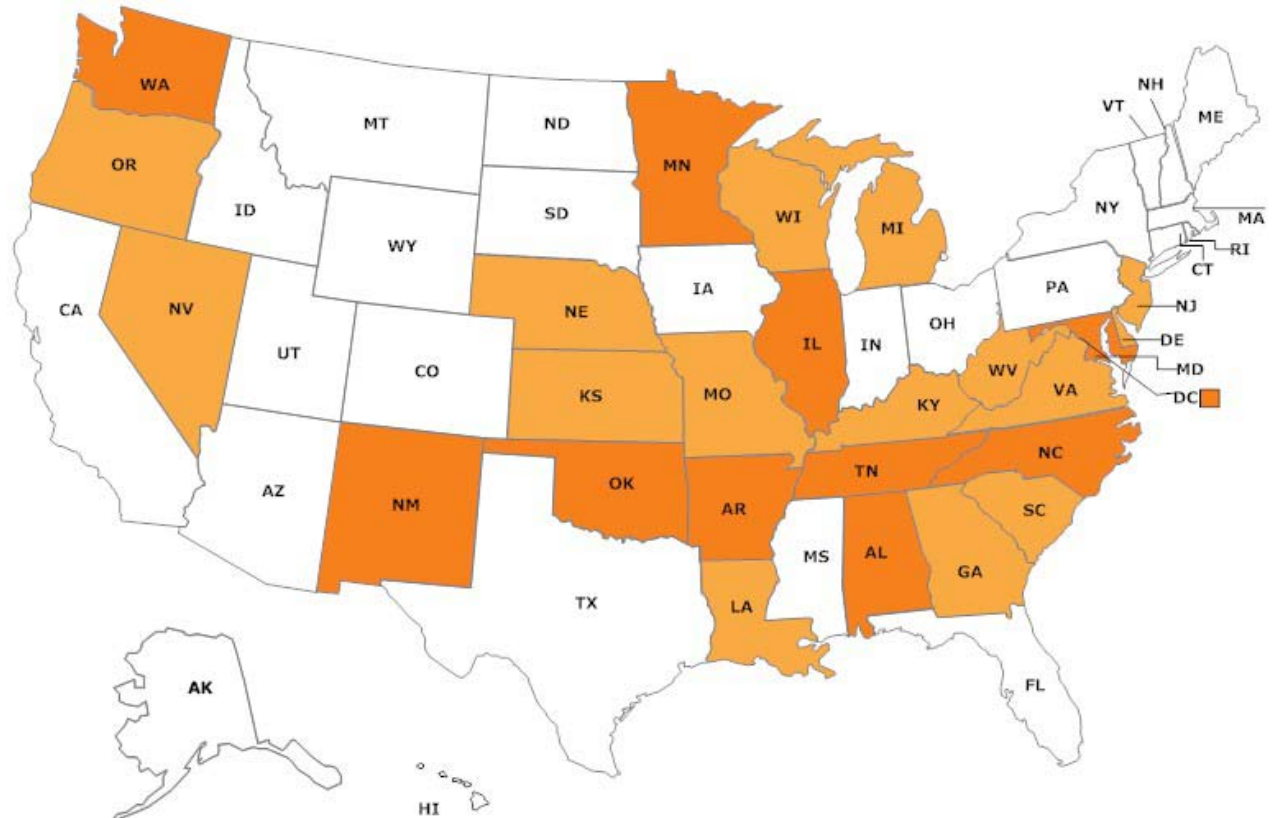
Alabama – 10  
Arkansas – 9  
Dist. of Columbia – 9  
Illinois – 9  
Maryland – 9  
Minnesota – 9  
New Mexico – 9  
North Carolina – 10  
Oklahoma – 9  
Tennessee – 9  
Washington - 9



**Source:** All data are from the National Institute for Early Education Research and reflect 2007-2008 school year, except for DC data, which refer to 2006-2007.

## Quality Pre-K: 15 States get a 7 or 8 on NIEER's Scale

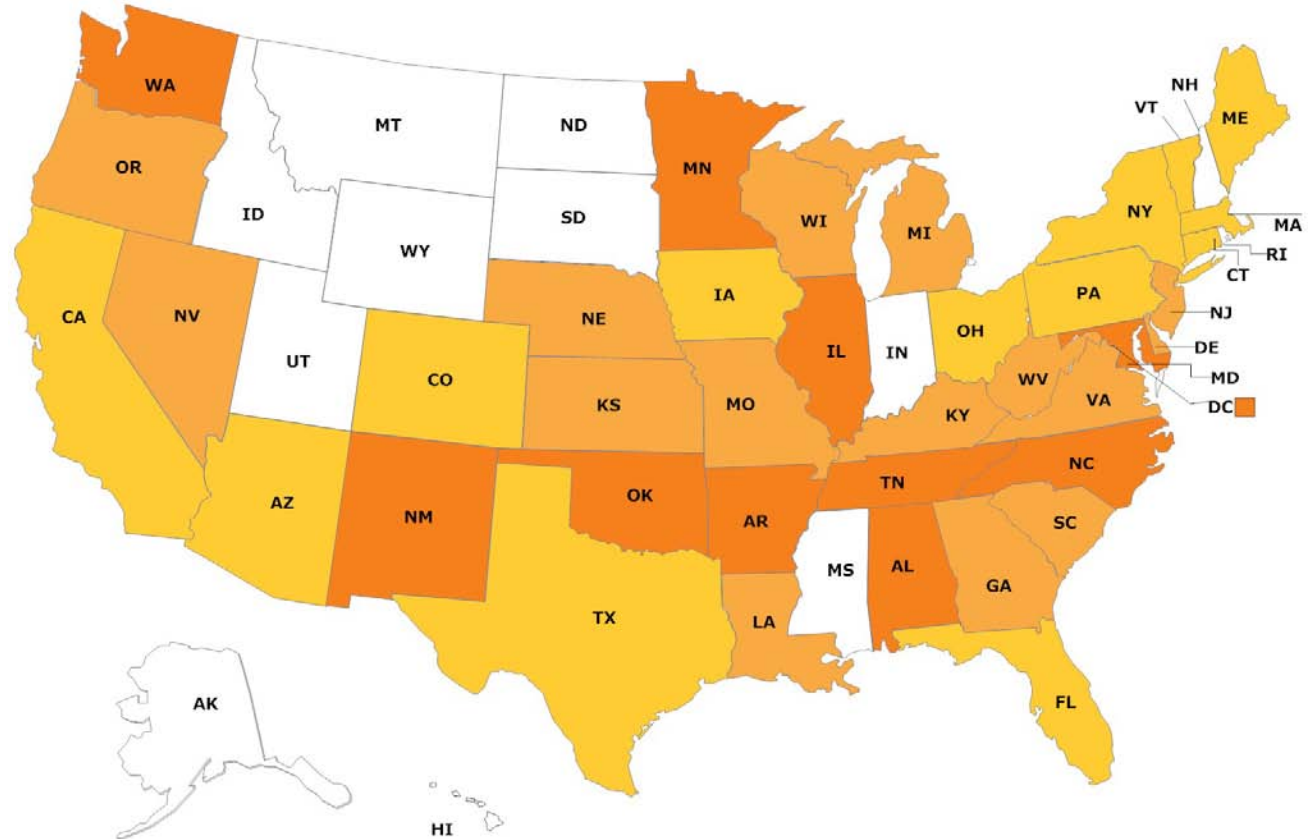
Delaware – 8  
 Georgia – 8  
 Kansas – 7  
 Kentucky – 8  
 Louisiana – 7.9  
 Michigan – 8  
 Missouri - 7  
 Nebraska – 8  
 Nevada – 7  
 New Jersey – 8.5  
 Oregon – 8  
 South Carolina – 8  
 Virginia – 7  
 West Virginia – 7  
 Wisconsin – 7



**Source:** All data are from the National Institute for Early Education Research and reflect 2007-2008 school year, except for DC data, which refer to 2006-2007.

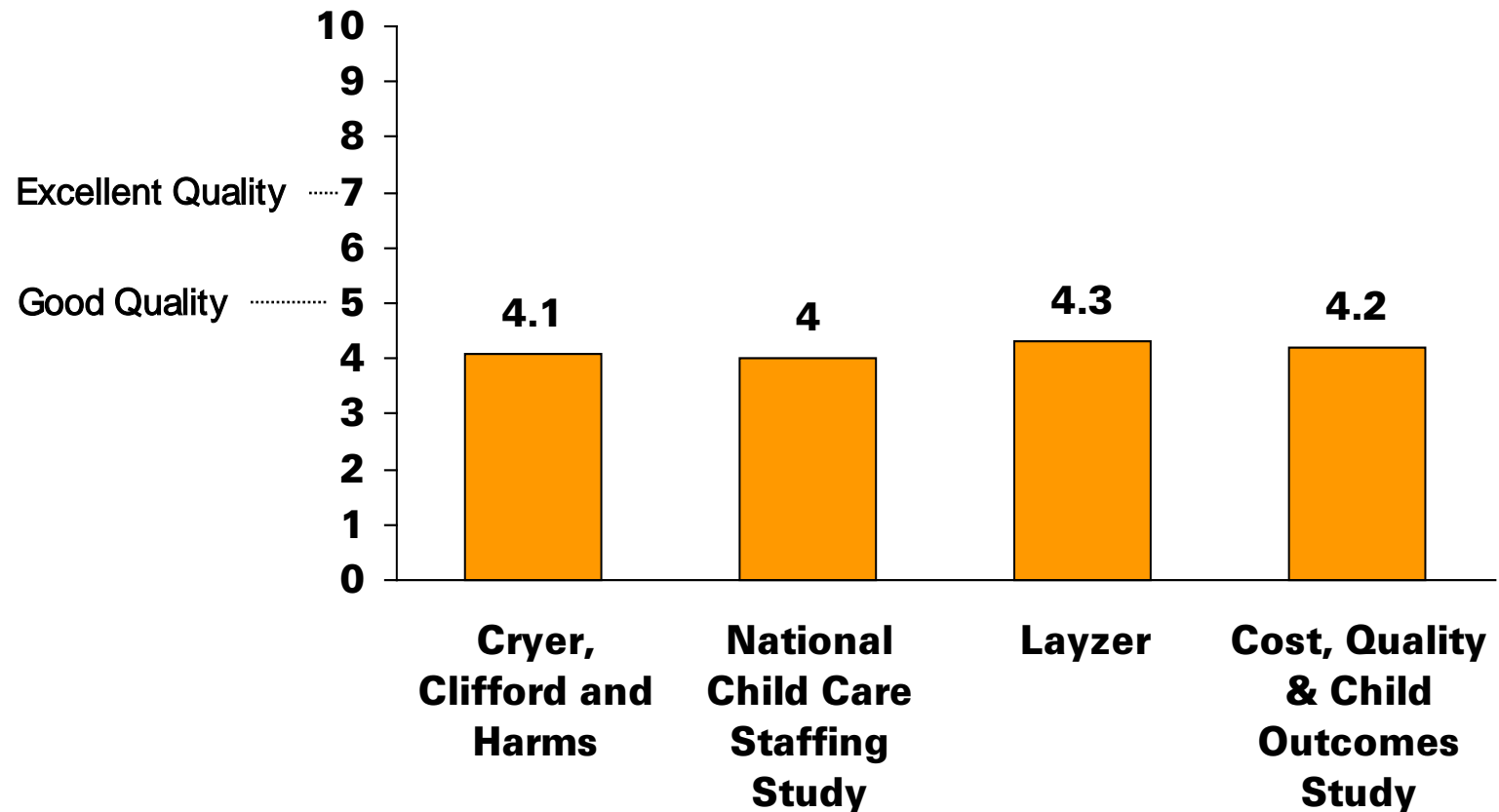
## Quality Pre-K: 13 States get a 4, 5, or 6 on NIEER's Scale

Arizona – 4  
 California – 4  
 Colorado – 6  
 Connecticut – 6  
 Florida – 4  
 Iowa – 6.7  
 Maine – 5  
 Massachusetts – 5  
 New York – 6  
 Ohio – 4.3  
 Pennsylvania – 6.2  
 Texas – 4  
 Vermont – 6.8



**Source:** All data are from the National Institute for Early Education Research and reflect 2007-2008 school year, except for DC data, which refer to 2006-2007.

## Average Quality Ratings (ECERS Scores) in four different studies



**Source:** Quality in Child Care Centers (1997). Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs, National Center for Early Development and Learning, Volume 1, Number 1.

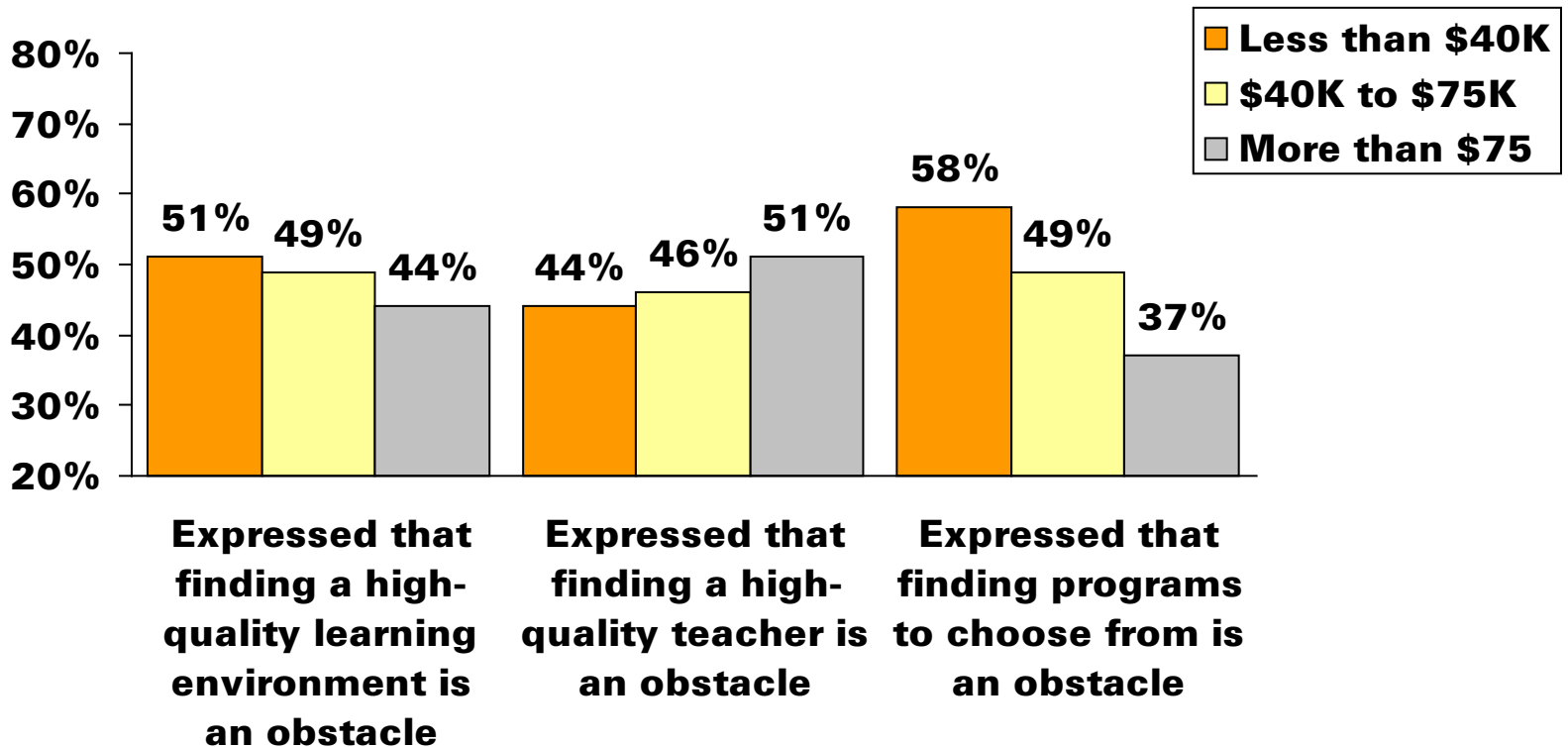
## High-Quality Programs are Scarce

- The top obstacles parents say they face in finding pre-k programs for their children are:
  - Affordability (59%)
  - Availability (48%)
  - High quality
    - Learning environment (48%)
    - Teachers (47%)

**Source:** Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. Poll of Parents of 2 to 6 year olds, April 2003. Q11.

## High-Quality Programs are Scarce

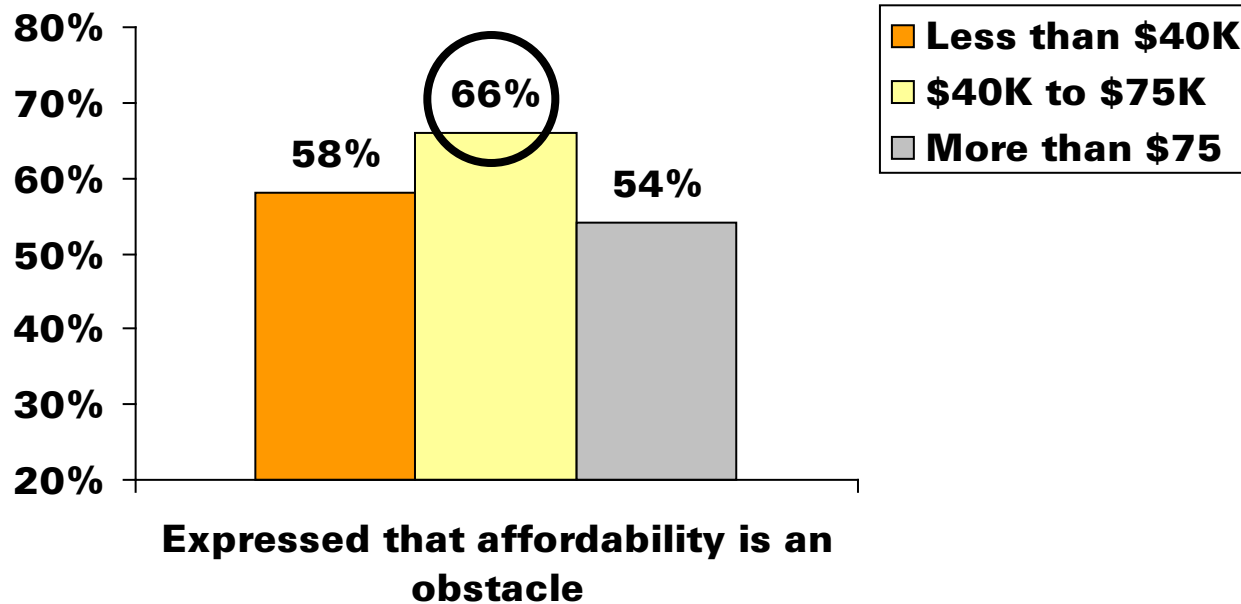
Regardless of income, finding a high quality program is an obstacle.



Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. Poll of Parents of 2 to 6 year olds, April 2003. Q11.

## High-Quality Programs are Scarce

Middle income parents express the most difficulty finding an affordable program.



Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. Poll of Parents of 2 to 6 year olds, April 2003. Q11.

## Pre-K Now

- An advocacy and public education organization supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts and other funders.
- Collaborates with state advocates and policymakers to lead a movement for high quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.
- Our vision is a nation where every child enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

